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SUBJECT: OBAMA DIDN'T SAY 'GENOCIDE' ... IN ENGLISH

MONDAY, APRIL 27, 2009

In Today's Papers

Obama Didn't Say 'Genocide'... in English (Haberturk)  
Media outlets over the weekend at first appeared relieved that President Obama did not use the word "genocide" in his statement commemorating the events of 1915. However, today's press coverage is turning more negative against the statement, which referred to the events of 1915 by using the Armenian term "Meds Yeghern, Armenian for "The Great Catastrophe." Mainstream Vatan reports "This statement was stronger than prior statements." Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak headlines "Big Reactions to the Great Catastrophe," and notes that "Ankara was infuriated by Obama's statement and called it 'unacceptable'", including "the Prime Minister who gave a sharp response to Obama." Mainstream Hurriyet reports "The Prime Minister gave a strong answer to Obama" by saying "Turkey is not a country that can be deceived." Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet reports "Reactions Will Be Shown to Obama Via Official Lines of Communication," claiming "a note will be given to the U.S." to protest the "unacceptable statement."

Some outlets began to imply that although the word genocide was not explicitly used, the President found a way to say it implicitly. Yesterday's Milliyet commented, "Obama's statement was an elegant way of recognizing genocide." Mainstream Haberturk says "Obama just didn't say 'genocide' in English," because he used the Armenian term "Meds Yeghern," which, the paper contends "is equivalent to saying genocide." Yesterday's Haberturk pointed to three sentences in the statement where Obama "implied genocide charges." First, he said "There is no change in my position," which Haberturk says indicates Obama has not changed his prior opinion that a genocide occurred. Second, the paper notes he said "Turks and Armenians should acknowledge their common history" which the paper interprets to mean "Turkish people should recognize the genocide." Finally, the paper says that Obama's call for dialogue is actually "a call to Turks to debate the issue."

Turkish Leaders React Strongly to President Obama's April 24 Speech  
Media outlets reported over the weekend and today that Turkish political leaders were "displeased" by President Obama's use of

"Meds Yeghern" (Great Calamity in Armenian) during his April 24 statement to commemorate the events of 1915. Parliament Speaker Koksals Toptan said Sunday "Statements like President Obama's remarks on the events of 1915 seriously harm the normalization process between Turkey and Armenia." Toptan told reporters that despite Turkey's efforts, Obama was "not fully informed" about what happened in 1915. Toptan also warned Armenian officials that "ties cannot be normalized this way." The Turkish Foreign Ministry (MFA) said in a statement on its webpage, "It should not be forgotten that several hundred thousand Turks also lost their lives in the same region, and at the same period, in the context of the events of 1915." "History can be construed and evaluated only on the basis of undisputed evidence and documentation. It's with such an understanding that we support the historical dimension of the Turkish-Armenian dialogue," said the MFA.

Addressing a gathering of the AKP provincial heads on Sunday, Prime Minister Erdogan said Obama's speech was both "unacceptable" and an "unrealistic interpretation of history." "It is distressing that the events of 1915 are being abused and used to garner votes," said Erdogan, arguing that Obama's statement "fulfilled the promises he made during his election campaign. These issues should be left to historians, otherwise, it adversely affects the relations between the countries." Erdogan stressed Turkey's efforts for a settlement with Armenia, and said, "Turkey is not a country that can be deceived easily." In a statement, President Abdullah Gul said he did "not agree" with some parts of Obama's speech. "Hundreds of thousands of Turks and Muslims were killed in 1915, therefore, the agonies of both sides should be shared," said Gul. Gul emphasized politicians and statesmen cannot make a judgment about history,

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noting that "diplomacy must be given a chance."

Opposition CHP leader Deniz Baykal said, "President Obama did not utter the word 'genocide,' but by using the Armenians' terminology and interpretation, he proved he shares the views of Armenia and the Armenian Diaspora." Baykal added it was "disappointing" that Obama's statement proves the events of 1915 were not seen in a way that takes into account the losses on both sides. "The aim of such statements is to manipulate Turkey's foreign policy. Turkey should be saved from such blackmail," stressed Baykal. Opposition MHP leader Devlet Bahçeli said in a statement the "The U.S. President clearly expressed that he agrees with the Armenians." "Obama's speech, however, put an end to this matter being a Sword of Damocles hanging over Turkey," said Bahçeli, and called on Prime Minister Erdogan to "undo his fault."

Mainstream Haberturk reported Saturday Ambassador Jeffrey was summoned to the Turkish Foreign Ministry (MFA), and was told that the "comments from the U.S. were unacceptable." Papers report Turkey's Ambassador in Washington, Nabi Sensoy, too, conveyed Ankara's anxiety to the State Department. The Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet says Monday that Ankara is to submit notes of protest to the State Department in Washington and the U.S. Embassy in Ankara, saying Turkey do not accept the U.S. President's statement on the events of 1915. The Islamist-oriented Zaman reports Sunday that Prime Minister Erdogan "warned" the U.S. against statements that could "harm the process of normalization between Turkey and Armenia."

Prime Minister Erdogan Sends Message to President Aliyev  
Liberal Radikal and conservative-nationalist Turkiye report that PM Erdogan sent a message to Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev and told him not to be deceived by those who were trying to damage Ankara-Baku relations. Weekend papers reported that Azerbaijan, not pleased with recent developments regarding Turkey-Armenia rapprochement, increased the price of natural gas sold to Turkey. Moreover, Sunday's Vatan reported that Azerbaijan voiced its reaction to Turkey by closing down a mosque in Baku which was constructed by the Turkish Religious Affairs Directorate. Today's mainstream Sabah and Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak report that Turkish Energy Minister Hilmi Guler denied the reports regarding the gas price increase and said "it is not possible to increase the price of natural gas sold by Azerbaijan to Turkey because there is a contract regulating the issue." However, NTV's 7 am news broadcast

this morning quoted an Azeri official on the issue saying that "the contract has expired already."

#### Editorial Commentary on Turkey-Armenia with President Obama's April 24 Speech

Mehmet Barlas wrote in mainstream Sabah (4/26): "Turkish foreign diplomacy has always been conducted under certain declared positions and any change in these positions could be interpreted as a concession. Turkish politicians and diplomats prefer to stick with their prepared positions on every issue, from the Armenian issue to the EU, from Cyprus to northern Iraq and others. Interestingly, the political geography surrounding us has changed while our positions have remained the same. Turkey's position regarding the Armenian genocide claims, for instance, has remained unchanged in the same way that our Cyprus position remained the same 25 years. One of the fundamental requirements of 'realpolitik' is to face change and be able to produce politics based on global realities. Even the United States, with its super power influence, does not have the luxury of remaining unchanged. Changing our positions based on world realities will only provide Turkey with better harmonization both inside and outside."

Ferai Tinc wrote in mainstream Hurriyet: "In this post April 24 period, it is very important to see whether normalization with Armenia remains cosmetic or whether there will be concrete steps to follow. At this stage, we must find ways to overcome our worries as

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well as the prejudices of the Turkish, Armenian and Azerbaijan peoples. Otherwise, without popular support, normalization cannot move forward."

Semih Idiz wrote in mainstream Milliyet: "President Obama did not pronounce the word 'genocide' but he meant it. On the other hand, Obama also clearly asked both Turkey and Armenia to remain committed to the normalization process. Washington expects Turkey to start diplomatic ties with Armenia as soon as possible and hopes to see the border opened. The pending genocide resolution in the U.S. Congress indicates that the Armenian issue within Turkish-American relations is not yet over. Moreover, President Obama's April 24 message did not make it easier either. Whether PM Erdogan likes it or not, he will need the advice of experienced diplomats in the days to come."

Ali Aslan wrote in Islamist oriented Zaman: "Obama's language in the April 24 message indicates that Turkey has lost the Armenian issue in America from the intellectual and political perspective. It is important to note that the U.S. government and Congress share similar Judeo-Christian values to the Armenians, who are Christian. However, Obama also did his best not to use the word 'genocide' in his statement, which indicates a good chance that Turkey can remain committed to diplomacy. There is a new deadline coming up - on October 14, 2009 the Turkish and Armenian soccer teams will play a match. There has to be some ways to find concrete measures on the Turkey-Armenia road map for a formula to ease Azeri worries before that date."

Ruhat Mengi wrote in mainstream Vatan: "There is no room for optimism any longer. While some were expecting a soft approach from President Obama, he went even further and used stronger language than former presidents. Next year we are likely to hear the word 'genocide,' which will be followed by Armenian claims for compensation and territory."

Huseyin Bas wrote in leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet: "Don't be fooled by the Armenian Diaspora's statements indication dissatisfaction regarding President Obama's April 24 message. In fact, they got what they wanted. Armenian influence remains very strong in American politics and Turkey's step toward a road map with Armenia cannot give us anything positive. We hope to see results from the Turkish-Armenian historians' commission but Washington has already made up its mind."

Yavuz Baydar wrote in the English language daily Today's Zaman: "Turkey has changed since the early 1990s, which marks a remarkable

transition. Hopefully one day soon civilians from both sides can determine whether to call the events 'Yeds Meghern' or something else. The obsession with the rulers of this nation with one single word [genocide] is already sentenced to oblivion."

Admiral Mullen's 'Jet Speed' Visit to Turkey (Vatan)  
Mainstreams Hurriyet, Milliyet and Vatan and Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak reported that the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Admiral Mike Mullen paid a 12-hour visit to Ankara over the weekend. Hurriyet says Admiral Mullen stopped in Ankara on his way from Iraq to Washington. He held meetings only with TGS Chief General Basbug. They had dinner together and later met from 19.00 to 23.00. Papers report the two discussed Iraq, PKK terrorism, Caucasus stability and Afghanistan. Milliyet says "It was noticed that Mullen's visit wasn't announced in order to keep his meeting quiet."

TV News (CNN Turk)

Domestic

- The military General Staff (TGS) said Sunday Turkey will stage a joint military exercise with Syria across the border on Monday, and will sign a memorandum of understanding on military cooperation with Kuwait.

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- Justice Minister Mehmet Ali Sahin said a file on the Deniz Feneri case was given to the Turkish embassy in Germany. Sahin said the documents were being "assessed and translated."

- Justice Minister Mehmet Ali Sahin said 70,000, and not 70 million, people were "wiretapped" via judge permissions within the operations against crime in Turkey.

- State Minister Mehmet Simsek has submitted to the IMF a medium-term timetable for reforms.

World

- Iranian President Ahmadinejad says his government would accept a two-state solution for Israelis and Palestinians if Palestinians did.

- Spain says that in the fall, Spain and Egypt would organize a summit on the peace process in the Middle East with Arab heads of state and government.

- Prime Minister Sali Berisha says Albania will apply to start negotiations on EU candidate status on April 28.

- At least 80 people in Mexico have died after contracting swine flu, with 20 cases also reported in the U.S. and six in Canada.

JEFFREY